



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

WILLIAMS'S THE HEBREW-CHRISTIAN MESSIAH

The Hebrew-Christian Messiah, or The Presentation of the Messiah to the Jews in the Gospel according to St. Matthew, being Twelve Lectures delivered before the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn on the Foundation of Bishop Warburton in the years 1911-15. By A. LUKYN WILLIAMS, D. D., with an Introductory Note by the BISHOP OF ELY. Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 1916. pp. xxii + 425.

THE purposes of this volume are clearly set forth by the author in his preface. They are in the first place to offer an interpretation of the leading ideas contained in the book of Matthew, in their relation to the ideas current at the time of the apostle in his Jewish surroundings; secondly, to seek to apply some of these ideas to the needs and requirements of the present time; and, thirdly, to offer a clearer and more exact knowledge of Jesus as the Messiah to the Jews of to-day. Matthew was written primarily for Jewish Christians, to strengthen them in their new faith and to provide them with arguments against the objections of their Jewish brethren. Hence the book might well be regarded as a presentation of the Christ to the Jews, and by a modern restatement of its main ideas it may also serve the same purpose for the Jews of the present time. The author endeavours consciously and conscientiously not to allow the last two purposes to affect the main aim of the book, which is exegetical in the larger sense. His piety and zeal in behalf of his faith and his loyalty to his particular denomination cannot but find an echo in his discussion of the various subjects of his theme, although it is his intention to be purely scientific. Our author is

honest, both in his own beliefs and in the appeal that he wishes them to make to others, and this honesty of purpose and candidness in the presentation at once attract the sympathetic interest and regard of the reader. In questions which do not involve a Christian dogma our author is critical and exact, and frequently displays originality of thought and a firm grasp of the subject. Where, however, Christian doctrine is concerned he falls back on his faith, so that his arguments have an appeal only to such as are possessed of a faith like his own. He shows a considerable familiarity with the literature on the subject, although he is not always careful to distinguish the value of the various sources from which he draws his information.

The first chapter of the book deals with the question of the genealogy of Jesus, his meeting with John, and his first appearance in Galilee. The simple faith of the author is indeed appealing, though his effort to give it a scientific basis is far from successful. The position of the various sects in the Jewish Commonwealth at the time of Jesus is fully discussed in the second chapter. Dr. Williams dismisses the Essenes as being entirely outside of his inquiry, since their doctrines had no influence on the early Christians. The opinion of Graetz and other scholars that the teachings of the Essenes had a decided influence on the development of early Christianity he regards as unproved by any substantial argument (compare the recent presentation of the life of Jesus in story form by George Moore in his *The Brook Kerith*, where it is made to appear that the Essenes played a very important part in the mental development of Jesus). The Sadducees also are given but little space in the discussion, since they paid no attention to the invitation of the Messiah, because of their worldly interests and lack of spiritual insight. The main interest of our author centres about the Pharisees and the contradictory estimates of them in the Gospels and in the Jewish sources of the same period. After quoting copiously from modern Jewish authors, who present different solutions to this difficulty, the author comes to the conclusion that the term 'hypocrite' used in connexion with the Pharisees in Matthew is to be given a more extended

connotation than the one given to it now. The Pharisees were indeed deeply religious, seeking righteousness and loving God, but shallow in their religious conceptions and 'lacking submission to God and his ways of salvation'. The reader cannot help but sympathize with the author in his difficulty and appreciate his zeal in endeavouring to find a solution to it, but, after reading the lengthy argument which he advances, he may still be inclined to agree with the verdict given by Mr. Herford that 'if there was on the part of the Pharisees a complete inability to comprehend the religious position of Jesus, there was also on his part an inability to comprehend the religious position of the Pharisees' (*Pharisaism*, p. 170).

Our author treads on more slippery ground when he begins to consider the miracles attributed to Jesus in the Gospels. Assuming the truth of the miraculous narratives, not only as they appeared to the contemporaries of Jesus, but as essentially true, our author still endeavours to connect the miracles with natural phenomena and with scientific theories of disease. He classifies the miracles, labels them with modern designations, comes dangerously close to the modern Christian Science theories, and even endeavours to prove their veracity by actual experiences. It is futile to argue about such matters, but to induce a belief in Jesus as the Christ in a modern Jew more substantial proofs than those based on Jesus as the Healer will be necessary.

In the consideration of Jesus as the Teacher, to which three chapters are devoted, it is but natural for our author to begin with a comparison between Jesus and the Jewish teachers of his time. Freely and generously conceding the greatness of the Rabbis, their religious zeal, their pedagogic insight, and their masterful presentation, the author still claims superiority for Jesus, a superiority which lay mainly in his personality. In connexion with this several specific teachings of Jesus, as the 'Lord's Prayer' and the dictum 'love thy enemies', are taken up and compared with similar Jewish teachings. In this consideration also enters the discussion regarding the permanence of the Jewish Law taught by Jesus, which apparently contradicts the

teaching of Paul regarding the inefficacy of the Law. Here a distinction in the meaning of the term Torah is given—Jesus using the term in its broad and spiritual significance, while Paul was thinking only of the ritual and legal aspect of it. This leads our author to the discussion of the subject whether it is possible or desirable at the present time to have a Hebrew-Christian Church, the members of which should be adherents of the orthodox Jewish customs and ceremonies and at the same time good Christians. His conclusions are not in harmony with the resolutions adopted recently at the oecumenical conference held in St. Louis. The ethical teachings of the Sermon on the Mount are then taken up and discussed in comparison with the ethical teachings of contemporary Judaism. The author admits that there was nothing new or original in the doctrines enunciated, but that the force of the Sermon lay rather in the exposition and the emphasis placed on certain well-known principles. The impracticability of the actual application of some of the formulae is explained on the ground that they were not meant for the masses, but only for the few select, those who feel themselves 'poor in spirit' and maintain their complete dependence on God.

The seventh, eighth, and ninth chapters are devoted to the discussion of the three terms by which the Messiah is designated in Matthew—the Son of David, the Son of Man, and the Son of God. Not content to take the term 'Son of David' merely as a synonym for the Messiah, Dr. Williams goes into great detail to prove the Davidic descent not only of Joseph but also of Mary, which he considers necessary because of his belief in the virgin birth of Jesus. In the term 'the Son of Man' our author sees several distinct connotations. In the first place, it implies weakness, privation, and suffering, the ideas suggested by its use in the book of Ezekiel. On the other hand, it also implies the idea of the perfection of the human soul 'akin to God and therefore receptive of authority on earth, and to be made supreme hereafter'. In the title 'Son of God' our author refuses to see a mere figure of speech, but, like the truly orthodox Christian that he is, he takes it in its literal sense, denoting not only a moral

and a spiritual, but also an actual relationship with the divine. The incarnation of the divine spirit in human form is, according to our author, not only reasonable but necessary, and the real meaning of such a belief and all that it implies is fully appreciated and minutely discussed by him.

The relation of early Christianity to the apocalyptic and pseudepigraphic writings is given full recognition in a separate chapter. Our author is perplexed by the problem as to the manner in which Jesus understood the prophecies about the Kingdom of God, which form the main subject of these books, to be fulfilled in him: Has the Kingdom come with his appearance? will it come very soon? or is it to be delayed to a remote future, as indicated in these books? Passages are found in Matthew that may be interpreted to prove one or the other of these suppositions. While it is admissible to presume that Jesus was mistaken, although this is 'exceedingly improbable', he could not be so blind as to imagine that the whole Jewish nation would accept him as the Messiah and follow his teachings. Jesus was certain that a long period would pass before his return on the 'clouds of heaven', but, because he employed trenchant language in the picturesque presentation of his hopes, his hearers supposed that the time of the Kingdom would be here very soon. While the nature of the predicted change is not definitely stated, it is plain that it was not to be gradual but rather catastrophic.

Dr. Williams lays the blame for the crucifixion of Jesus both upon the Jews and the Romans alike. The Sadducees were then in power; hence they are made to bear the burden of the guilt. The Pharisees, however, as well as the great Jewish masses, were not only pleased with the execution, but probably also helped and abetted it. 'The shame is that the Jews, the most enlightened nation of the time, with a knowledge of God, theoretical and practical, far surpassing any other, acted as they did. . . . The history of the Passion suggests, not that the Jews were sinners above all others, but that there was and is something radically wrong with the whole human race, when its best representatives act thus towards the embodiment of truth and holiness and love.'

Jews will be ready to agree with this last statement, because of their bitter experiences, through many centuries, with the followers of Jesus.

The death of Jesus, however, was not an accident but rather a part of the divine plan. Jesus died so that he might serve as a ransom for the sins of his people. But only the sins of those who believed in him would be atoned by his death. His advent and death were not to work a mechanical change in the world. The change of soul that a belief in him works prepares one for the benefits derived from his death. Our author does not shirk the difficulty of the doctrine of vicarious atonement, but he asserts his firm belief in it and proves that Matthew certainly believed in it. Our author also declares his firm belief in the resurrection of Jesus, as narrated in Matthew and in the other Gospels. And this resurrection was in the body, although the body may have been a kind of refined matter.

Combining sound scholarship with a fiery religious zeal, our author has succeeded in clearing many moot points for the believing Christian. His critical faculty frequently gives way to his religious enthusiasm, and this should be a merit rather than a fault to the believer. It is true that his purpose to reach the intelligent Jew has not been attained, not so much because of his lack of knowledge of Jewish sources, but rather because of his lack of understanding and appreciation of the Jewish soul and its strivings. His zeal arouses sympathy, but not conviction; his simple faith and sincerity call forth admiration, but do not persuade. Still, even the Jewish reader will find in this volume much that will be of value and interest to him.

JULIUS H. GREENSTONE.

Gratz College.